

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Patrick Harrison  
Paradise Advertising & Marketing  
727.821.5155 ext 110  
Patrick@ParadiseAdv.com



**FOLLOW THE TRAIL THROUGH CENTRAL FLORIDA**

*Fitness and Eco-Enthusiasts Meet in Seminole County*

Beyond Orlando's make-believe landscape and man-made attractions lies a natural wonderland for active visitors to discover the insider's Florida. Located just northeast of Orlando, Seminole County has more than 70 miles of trails set in a serene tropical environment, perfect for a fitness enthusiast looking for a Central Florida getaway.

Winding through neighborhoods, parks and rural areas, Seminole County boasts a trail system for running, jogging, walking, biking, rollerblading and horseback riding. Trail runners, hikers and mountain bikers can explore more than 21 miles of marked, unpaved trails on the Flagler Wilderness Trail. Connecting the cities of Altamonte Springs, Lake Mary, Longwood, Winter Springs and Oveido, parts of the continuous trail system are designated as legs of the Florida National Scenic Trail, a 1,300-mile trail running the length of the state.

Access to the trails is simple – there are a number of trailheads dispersed throughout the county. The trailheads have ample parking, benches and restrooms and there are fitness stations and water fountains at some points on the trails. Intersections with most major roads are safely bypassed with trail overpasses. However, there is no public transportation to get back to the starting point.

Two of the most popular trails, the Seminole-Wekiva Trail and Cross Seminole Trail, run to or along the scenic St. John's River Basin and Wekiva Springs National Park. Home to a diverse plant and animal population, St. John's River Basin is also called the Central Florida Everglades. Located on the western border of Seminole County, the Wekiva River is fed by several underground springs that pump approximately 48 million gallons of crystal-clear, fresh water through the river every day.

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With shade provided by the ancient forest, visitors can see exotic and native flora and fauna while exploring the trail system. Some native vegetation includes saw grass, spider lilies, tropical ferns, palmettos, star anise and Spanish moss. The pristine landscape allows fauna to thrive. Wood stork, osprey, limpkin, rosette spoonbill, and stilts can be seen wading in the shallow water at the river's edge or perched high on a limb of an ancient cypress or slash pine. The endangered bald eagle and American White Pelican are often seen soaring overhead.

The American alligator and the endangered gopher tortoise can be observed basking in the sun in the water along the trails. The area is also home to a variety of other Florida faunas including white-tailed deer, wild hogs, raccoons, bobcats and the Florida black bear, which is currently listed on the threatened species list. In the winter months, endangered Florida manatees can be seen feeding on aquatic vegetation in the St. Johns River.

Many of the trails run through stunning illustrations of pure and primitive Florida, prior to urban development. Seminole County, with its central location and many natural diversions, is an ideal destination for visitors who want to experience the best of Florida naturally.

*Located in the heart of Central Florida, and within a 15-minute drive from its tourist-magnet neighbor, Orlando, Seminole County offers immediate access to theme parks, exciting entertainment and thrilling nightlife. Surrounded by the beauty of natural Florida, Seminole County also offers the classic Florida experience of peaceful rivers, fishing, boating, hiking and more. And it's all within an easy drive of Florida's fabulous Treasure Coast beaches and Kennedy Space Center. For destination information call 407-665-2900 or visit [www.VisitSeminole.com](http://www.VisitSeminole.com).*

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